



INCREASING ACCESS

What Students and Parents
Should Know About Getting
Into College or a University



Dear Parents:

Most parents dream that their children will one day obtain college degrees – but this takes a great deal of planning. You can play a vital role by getting involved in your children's schooling and by rewarding their academic achievement. Parents and students can start planning now by communicating with teachers, counselors and college admissions representatives to access the best educational opportunities.

Increasing Access: What Students and Parents Should Know About Getting Into College or a University provides guidelines on how to effectively make decisions regarding your children's education. The pamphlet contains information on elementary, junior and high school curriculum and answers questions about college entrance exams and financial aid.

By participating in your children's education and helping them prepare for college, you will help them realize their potential and have a brighter future.

Sincerely,

CHRISTINE KEHOE

State Senator, 39th District

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CALIFORNIA'S GOAL OF EDUCATIONAL EQUALITY

As we begin the 21st century, it is absolutely necessary that we strive to attain the goal of educational equality and diversity. California 2000 should not only reflect a diversity of ethnic, racial and economic backgrounds, it must also reflect the richness of language, gender and culture that is represented in California's population. Providing an opportunity for all our youth to receive a quality education will put us one step closer to attaining that goal of complete educational equality.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IS THE TIME PARENTS NEED TO START PREPARING A CHILD FOR COLLEGE

Competition for admission to a college or university in the coming century will be fierce. There will be 500,000 more Californians seeking access to higher education than there are Californians currently enrolled in institutions of higher education. Therefore, parents need to start preparing their children for college as early as elementary school.

SKILLS AND ABILITIES YOUR CHILDREN SHOULD ACQUIRE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND JUNIOR HIGH

4TH GRADE

At the fourth grade level, children make the educational transition from learning to read to reading to learn. In the fourth grade, children should receive instruction in four areas:

Reading and Language Arts

(writing, spelling, listening and oral language skills)

• Grammar and Appropriate Usage

Students should be able to look up and know the meanings of words in the dictionary that they recognize and do not recognize. Students should be familiar with base words, prefixes and suffixes. They should know how to use punctuation such as periods, question marks, apostrophes, commas and exclamation marks. Students should be able to use adjectives correctly in a sentence and paragraph as well as identify subject verbs in present tense.

• Reading Comprehension Skills

When reading, students should recognize the chain of events. They should be able to write a paragraph that has a main idea along with supporting details and be able to summarize events along with main ideas. They should know the difference between fact and fiction and understand the difference between comparing and contrasting.

• Reference and Study Skills

Students should know how to use a dictionary and an encyclopedia. They should know when a magazine is a good resource. They should know how to use an outline. Students should understand different writing styles such as descriptive, biographical, reporting, observation and poetry.

• Literacy Skills

Students should understand similes and metaphors. They should understand the basic story elements of plot, character, setting, mood, conflict and theme. They should be able to see the difference between formal and informal language.

Mathematics

Students should learn problem solving skills, calculator technology, computation skills, estimates and mental arithmetic. By the fourth grade, students should be able to do the following: identify the place value of digit numbers 1 through 9, write out money amounts, estimate sums and differences, choose the correct operation to solve problems, find an average.

History and Social Science

At this age, students should be developing historical, ethical, cultural, geographical, economic and sociopolitical literacy. By the fourth grade, students should know the physical setting of California and understand its setting within the North American continent. They should be learning about the Colombian settlements and people, missions, ranches and the Mexican War for Independence, the gold rush, statehood and western movement, the period of rapid population growth, agriculture and links between California and the rest of the United States, modern California, immigration, technology and cities.

Science

Students should be instructed in Life, Earth and Physical Sciences while developing the scientific thinking process of comparing, ordering, relating, inferring and applying. Areas of study should include animals and plants, nutrition, safety and substance abuse awareness, the water cycle, water as a natural resource and weather, states of matter (solids, liquids, gases), properties of air, properties of matter, electricity and electron magnets (positive/negative charges).

5TH & 6TH GRADES

Continuing to build on previously acquired skills, fifth and sixth grade students should strive to improve skills in all areas.

Reading and Language Arts

• Grammar and Appropriate Usage

Students should learn that prepositional phrases can modify nouns and can act as adverbs. They should be able to use vivid adjectives and specific words to describe experiences and write descriptions. They should recognize present and past participle verb forms and combine simple sentences into complex sentences using conjunctions. They should be able to identify a sentence fragment and to change it into a complete sentence, recognize and be able to correct errors in punctuation of run-on sentences.

• Reading Comprehension Skills

Students should be able to reach conclusions based on important

details and the sequence of events. They should use context for meaning and comprehend the concept of comparing, contrasting and understanding analogies.

- **Reference and Study Skills**

Students need to learn to use the glossary or dictionary to locate the correct pronunciation of a word, the correct meaning of the word and determine the part of speech. They should be able to organize the writing of paragraphs and reports.

- **Literacy Skills**

Students should be able to identify the characteristics of science fiction, fantasy, folk tales, myths, legends, fictionalized biographies, historical fiction and plays and understand symbolism.

Mathematics

Students will continue learning problem solving skills, computation skills, estimates, computer technology and mental arithmetic. They should be able to formulate a plan and solve multi-step problems. They should be able to estimate sums of fractions and mixed numbers, add and subtract fractions, divide with fractions, whole numbers and mixed numbers and write fractions in the simplest form. They should be able to write a decimal for a percent and a percent for a decimal. They should be able to collect and record data by making a table bar graph, broken line graph or pictograph. They should be able to find the mean, median, mode and range.

History

Students should study world history and geography, including early humankind and the development of human societies, the beginning of civilization in Africa, the foundation of western ideas, the ancient Hebrews and Greeks and the early civilizations of India and China.

Science

Students should receive continued instruction in Life, Earth and Physical Sciences. They should study the interdependence of living and non-living things (characteristics, structures, homes, natural

selections), nutrition, safety, substance abuse awareness, the solar system, natural energy sources, conversion of land and water resources and electric energy.

7TH AND 8TH GRADES

Courses that are successfully completed in a student's high school years determine college admission options. However, classes that are taken in the 7th and 8th grade can also be used to meet college preparation requirements. Following are basic classes that students can take in order to prepare them for high school.

- **History**

Students in the seventh grade study World History from the fall of the Roman Empire to the Renaissance. Eighth graders study American History from colonization to the beginning of the twentieth century.

- **Language Arts**

The seventh grade programs commonly include one period of reading and one period of writing instruction (this may vary depending on individual schools). The eighth grade program integrates reading and writing into a single class period.

- **Math**

Most students enroll in Math 7 and Math 8. By the eighth grade students on the college preparatory track should be enrolled in Algebra and Geometry classes.

- **Science**

Laboratory and hands-on activities are important parts of the curriculum in addition to lecture, reading and writing.

- **Physical Education**

All seventh and eighth grade students engage in a daily program of physical fitness and sports activities.

- **Survey Classes**

Students should take advantage of a variety of month-long and year-long classes that emphasize artistic and creative endeavors. Classes include Drama, Art, Computer Technology, Home Economics, Speech and Journalism.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS AND COLLEGE PREPARATORY COURSES

As students enter into their high school years, it is very important that they, along with their parents, keep in close contact with the school counselor and their teachers. They should also contact the university or college admissions office.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The basic high school graduation requirements for college-bound students vary with each school district.

*Students and parents are encouraged to
contact their own school district for graduation
requirements particular to that school district.*

Beginning with the class of 2003/04, high school students will be required to pass a high school exit exam in reading, writing and mathematics in order to graduate. Students will first take the test in the tenth grade and can take it as many times as necessary to pass.

COLLEGE PREPARATORY CLASSES

Students may opt to take these classes to help prepare themselves for college:

- English - College preparatory courses for English are offered for all high school grade levels.
- Mathematics - Algebra 1 and 2, Geometry, Trigonometry, Precalculus, Calculus
- History - World Geography, World and U.S. History and U.S. Government

Students must earn a grade of “C” or better in these courses in order for the courses to qualify for college.

HONORS AND ADVANCED PLACEMENT CLASSES

Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) classes are available to students who test into the class or get teacher recommendation. Students must be entering their junior year to test for these courses.

Honors English

Honors Spanish

AP History

AP Government

AP Chemistry

Honors and AP class materials are much more advanced than the work given in a regular College prep course. Students test for these courses usually six months prior to the year in which they wish to take them. Taking the tests a semester early will prepare students for the classes.

Once a student has tested and has been accepted into an honors or AP course, that student cannot drop out of the course. Therefore, it is very important that students talk about taking the advanced courses with their counselors, teachers and parents before taking the entrance exams.

INFORMATION REGARDING STANDARDIZED TESTS

COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS

Students who plan on attending any college, whether it be a university or a private institute, must take either the SAT or the ACT exams. Students who plan to attend college usually begin taking the exams in the Spring semester of their junior year, then again in the Fall semester of their senior year. The SAT I, ACT and the SAT II are explained below.

SAT I and ACT

The two entrance tests used by United States colleges and universities are the SAT I and the ACT. Both tests are multiple choice in English, Math, Science and History. Either test is accepted when applying to a state university.

SAT II

Each SAT II exam covers one subject such as Chemistry or American History. Competitive colleges may require a writing and math test and ask you to choose a third test. To enter into the UC campuses students must have SAT I or ACT, and SAT II to apply for entrance into those universities.

The Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT):

PSAT/NMSQT
P.O. Box 6720
Princeton, NJ 08541-6720
Phone: 609-771-7070
<http://www.collegeboard>

The Scholastic Assessment Tests (SAT):

The College Board
Rosedale Road
Princeton, NJ 08541
Phone: 609-771-7600
<http://www.collegeboard.org>

The ACT (Formerly the American College Testing Program) :

ACT, Inc.
P.O. Box 168
2201 N. Dodge Street
Iowa City, IA 52243-0168
Phone: 319-337-1000
[http:// www.act.org](http://www.act.org)

COLLEGE ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

California's community college system is the largest higher education system in the world. Community colleges play an important role in ensuring all California residents access to quality higher education.

Community colleges are open to all students who have either graduated from an accredited high school or passed the California High School Proficiency Exam.

Community colleges offer low-cost, high quality courses. Community colleges are located throughout the state and are within commuting distance of more than 80 percent of the state's population.

Students and parents are encouraged to contact the California Community Colleges office to obtain additional information.

**Student Services Division
Community Colleges
1102 9th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: (916) 445-0102**

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY (CSU)

Students seeking admission into the CSU system must complete the requirements listed below in order to be eligible. Students wishing to further their education in the CSU system will have to fulfill both their high school requirements and these CSU requirements.

Students must complete 15 high school units (a unit is equivalent to an academic year, or two semesters of study) with a grade of "C" or better in each course. These courses must be identified as college preparatory by the high school the student is attending.

- History/American Government - 1 year
- English - 4 years

- Mathematics - 3 years (Algebra, Geometry, Intermediate Algebra)
- Laboratory Science - 1 year (Chemistry, Biology, Physics)
- Foreign Language - 2 years of the same language
- Visual and Performing Arts - 1 year (art, dance, music and drama courses meet this requirement)
- Academic Electives - 3 years (English, Advanced Mathematics, Social Science, History, Laboratory Science, and Foreign Language)

For first time freshmen, eligibility is determined by student grade point average (GPA) earned in the last three years of high school and the scores on the SAT I or ACT entrance exams. The GPA and the SAT score or ACT scores are computed together to determine admission eligibility. Students with a GPA of 3.0 or higher do not have to submit their SAT or ACT scores.

An adjustment to first-time freshman admissions standards was approved for Fall 1998 through Spring 2001. The adjustment allows the absence of up to one unit (one year) of visual and performing arts or foreign language, or one semester of each, as long as you have completed 15 or more college preparatory units. This means you must have completed an extra unit in another area to offset the missing unit of visual and performing arts or foreign language. If you are admitted with up to one unit of visual and performing arts or foreign language missing, you will be required to complete the missing course by the end of your first year of enrollment.

Students and parents are encouraged to contact California State University for additional information.

**California State University (CSU)
Office of the Chancellor
400 Golden Shore
Long Beach, CA 90802
Phone: 562-951-4731**

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Students seeking admission to the University of California must complete required high school courses known as the “A-F pattern.” A required 15 units is needed for students to complete the subject requirements for the University. Seven of the 15 units must be earned in courses taken during the last two years of high school.

- English - 4 years
- History/Social Science - 2 years (must consist of one year of U.S. History, or one half year of U.S. History and one half year of Civics or American Government, and one year of world history, cultures and geography)
- Mathematics - 3 years/ 4 recommended (Algebra, Geometry, Advanced Algebra)
- Laboratory Science - 2 years (in at least two of the three disciplines of biology, chemistry and physics)
- Foreign Language - 2 years/ 3 recommended
- Academic Electives - 2 years (History, English, Visual and Performing Arts, Foreign Language, Advanced Mathematics, Social Science and Laboratory Sciences)

All freshmen must take the SAT I or ACT in addition to the SAT II. The SAT II must include Writing, Mathematics and one test score from either Literature, Foreign Language, Sciences or Social Studies. All tests must be completed by December of the student’s senior year of high school.

The scholarship requirement for students applying to the State University or the University of California defines the GPA students must attain in the “A-F” subjects to be eligible for admission to the University. If a student’s “A-F” GPA is 3.3 or higher, they have met the minimum requirement for admission to the University. If their “A-F” GPA is below 3.3 but above 2.81, they have met the minimum requirement if they achieve the necessary college entrance test score according to the University Eligibility Index.

The University of California assigns extra points for up to four units of University certified honors level courses taken in the last

three years of high school – A=5 points, B=4 points, C=3 points. No more than two units of certified honors level courses taken in the tenth grade may be given extra points. A grade of D in an honors or advanced placement course does not earn extra points.

Students and parents are encouraged to contact the University of California for additional information.

**The University of California
Office of the President
1111 Franklin Street
Oakland, CA 94607-5200
Phone: 510-987-0700**

CALIFORNIA STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

WHAT IS FINANCIAL AID?

An important part of students continuing with their education is having money to pay for the education. Luckily, financial aid is available for students who do not have the financial means to pay for a college education. Financial aid is money that is offered to students who show a financial need. Financial aid can come in several different forms, such as grants, scholarships and loans. Each means of financial aid is different and has a different purpose. In order to find out how much money you may be eligible for, you must first fill out a financial aid form called the Free Application for Federal Student Loans (FAFSA).

FAFSA

Students applying for Federal student aid must complete the FAFSA. The most important advice about completing the FAFSA is to **READ THE INSTRUCTIONS!** The instructions included with the application explain how each question is to be answered. They should be read with great care and attention. It is important that the information is read, as well as the questions answered, and that the FAFSA is filled out correctly. Making a mistake on the form could jeopardize a student's chances of receiving federal aid.

Students can begin sending in their FAFSA applications after the first of the year in which they are applying. The deadline to apply is always March of the year for which you are applying for federal aid.

Example: *If you are applying to attend California State University in the Fall of 2000, then you would send your FAFSA information to Federal Aid starting January 1, 2000, until the deadline which is March 2, 2000.*

After a student has sent off the FAFSA, the student will then receive a postcard within four weeks verifying the Federal Aid office has received the FAFSA application and is in the process of reviewing it. Shortly after that notice, the student then will receive a document called SAR (Student Assessment Report). This document is a typed application that the Federal Aid office puts together based on the application they received. It also states what type of grant a student is eligible for. Review the SAR carefully. If there are any mistakes on the SAR, this is the time to correct them! Correct the mistakes in the area that is marked, then send it back immediately so that the changes can be made. Correcting these changes can increase the student's chances of receiving additional Federal Aid money.

FEDERAL AID MONEY

There are several different types of Federal aid a student can receive by filling out FAFSA information.

Grants

Unlike loans, grants do not have to be repaid. Grants are for students who show a specific type of GPA ranging from 3.0-3.5. Grants usually are given based on the information you provide on the FAFSA. The following grants are available:

- **CAL Grant A and B**

These grants are awarded to students from low and middle income families in meeting tuition costs. In addition, a student must have a GPA of at least a 3.0 cumulative. These grants cover all or most of a student's college tuition. Cal grants show up on students' SAR reports.

- **Federal Pell Grants**

Pell grants are awarded only to undergraduate students who have not earned bachelor's or professional degrees. For many students, Pell Grants provide a foundation of financial aid to which other aid may be added. Schools must inform students in writing how and when they will receive the award and how much it will be. Schools that do not use formally defined, traditional terms must pay students at least twice per academic year.

- **College Grants**

Colleges will often give out their own grants such as the Alumni, Merits or other special grants. You can get more information on these grants from the school to which you are applying.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships come from many different sources such as high schools, colleges and the community. There are many different forms of scholarships but not all are easy to find. Students who are serious about getting financial help through scholarships should visit career centers and talk to school counselors to get information. Here are some common scholarships that colleges offer to students who are applying for financial aid assistance:

- **Full-Ride Scholarships**

“Full-ride scholarships” basically means that a student's tuition, room and board are paid by the college the student is attending. This type of scholarship can be awarded based on the student's academic work or the student being an exceptional athlete.

- **Performing Arts Scholarships**

This scholarship is awarded to students who were involved with some sort of performing arts during their high school years. This scholarship usually covers a portion of student tuition.

- **Athletic Scholarships**

These scholarships are given to students who participated in athletic programs during their high school years. This scholarship usually covers a portion of student tuition.

Places To Look for Scholarships

- Counseling office on campus
- Special scholarship bulletin
- Teachers
- Local or school library
- Scholarship handbooks and guides
- Community-based organizations

LOANS

Unlike grants or scholarships, loans must be paid back with interest. Loans can be taken out by a student or parent and paid back as the student attends college or when the student graduates. If a loan is not paid back after a period of time, a permanent default will remain on the student's credit record. Listed below are loans that can be taken out by both students and parents:

• **Subsidized Loans**

Subsidized loans are awarded on the basis of financial need. Students will not be charged any interest before they begin repayment or during authorized periods of deferment. The federal government "subsidizes" the interest during these periods.

• **Unsubsidized Loans**

Unsubsidized loans are not awarded on the basis of need. Students taking out unsubsidized loans will be charged interest from the time the loan is disbursed until it is paid in full. If a student allows interest to accumulate, it will then become capitalized - that means that the interest will be added to the principal amount of a student's loan and additional interest will be based upon the higher amount. Students who choose to pay the interest as it accumulates will pay less later.

RESOURCES

California Student Aid Commission

3300 Zinfandel Drive

Rancho Cordova, CA 95741

Phone: 916-526-7590

Federal Student Financial Aid Information

1-800-4FED-AID

WEB SITE INFORMATION FOR FINANCIAL AID:

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

<http://www.finaid.org>

The Federal Government Financial Aid Site

<http://www.ed.gov/studentaid>

Fast Web

<http://fastweb.com>

Acknowledgments

California Postsecondary Education Commission
California Education Round Table
California Department of Education
California Student Aid Commission
California State University
California Community Colleges
The College Board
University of California
University of California, Riverside
Elk Grove Unified School District
Sacramento City Unified School District
Jackman Middle School

Prepared by the
SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
ADMISSIONS & OUTREACH
1020 N Street, Room 511
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Printed and Designed by Senate Reprographics